

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BELGRADE 5727

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PEPR, PBOR, YO, BU
SUBJ: YUGOSLAVIA EVALUATES POLEMICS WITH BULGARIA, HINTS
AT SOVIET ROLE

REF: (A) BELGRADE 4914, (B) SOFIA 1211

1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT: YUGOSLAVIA-BULGARIAN RELATIONS HAVE
REACHED THE LOWEST POINT IN SOME TIME, WITH POLEMICS ON BOTH
SIDES ESCALATING. THE JULY 31 INCIDENT IN SOFIA IN WHICH A
DISPLAY WINDOW ON OFFICIAL YUGOSLAV PREMISES WAS SHATTERED
WILL INEVITABLY ADD A NEW DIMENSION TO THE EVOLVING SITUATION.
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THE YUGOSLAVS DO NOT BELIEVE THE BULGARIANS ARE ACTION COM-
PLETELY ON THEIR OWN IN PURSUING THE DEBATE OVER MACEDONIA,
AND HAVE BEGUN OPENLY TO HINT AT A SOVIET ROLE.

2. MOST RECENT BULGARIAN MOVES NOTED HERE INCLUDE A DECLARA-
TION ISSUED BY THE BULGARIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY ON JULY 25
CHARGING THAT YUGOSLAVIA IS VIOLATING NON-ALIGNED PRINCIPLES

IN PURSUING ITS POLICY WITH REGARD TO MACEDONIA AND THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE. (THE BULGARIAN DECLARATION HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED BY THE BULGARIANS TO DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN BELGRADE.) A BTA ARTICLE DATED AUGUST 1 SOFIA (NOT YET APPEARING IN THE YUGOSLAV PRESS) CLAIMS THAT BULGARIA'S POLICY IN THE BALKANS IS BASED ON HELSINKI PRINCIPLES AND IMPLIES THAT YUGOSLAVIA'S ARE THE CONTRARY.

3. BULGARIAN CHARGES THAT THE YUGOSLAVS ARE VIOLATING CSCE AND "NON-ALIGNED" PRINCIPLES HAVE TOUCHED AN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE YUGOSLAV NERVE. THE RESPONSE HAS BEEN SOME OF THE HARSHEST POLEMICS IN RECENT MEMORY. CELEBRATIONS IN MACEDONIA SURROUNDING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ILINDEN UPRISING ARE PROVIDING THE CURRENT OCCASION. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT TITO TAKES THE HIGH ROAD, STRESSING THE PRINCIPLES NATURE OF YUGOSLAVIA'S POLICY, BOSKO STANKOVSKI (SENIOR MACEDONIAN PARTY FIGURE) IN AN AUGUST 1 SPEECH TAXES BULGARIA WITH THE FALSIFICATION AND USURPATION OF MACEDONIAN HISTORY, DIRTY INTENTIONS, CONSPIRATORIAL ASPIRATIONS, AND GREAT BULGARIAN PRETENSIONS. MACEDONIAN PREMIER BLAGOJ POPOV HAS ALSO FIRED OFF A HEAVY SALVO IN AN AUGUST 2 SPEECH AT KRUSEVO.

4. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO CERTAIN INDICATORS, THE POLEMICS MAY BE BEGINNING TO SPILL OVER INTO ECONOMICS AS WELL. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

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5. SHARP DOWNTURNS IN YGO-BULGARIAN RELATIONS. YUGOSLAV-BULGARIAN RELATIONS BEGAN TO TAKE A TURN FOR THE WORSE EARLY THIS YEAR AS BULGARIAN CELEBRATIONS OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAN STEFANO HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY PERCEIVED IN YUGOSLAVIA AS HAVING IRREDENTIST OVERTONES. THE YUGOSLAV PRESS BEGAN INCREASINGLY FREQUENTLY TO PRINT ARTICLES EXPRESSING INDIGNATION AT BULGARIAN "REWRITING" OF HISTORY, STRONGLY IMPLYING THAT THIS IS MEANT TO REVIVE BULGARIAN CLAIMS ON MACEDONIA. BULGARIA OFFICIALLY MAINTAINED SILENCE UNTIL ZHIVKOV'S JUNE 15 SPEECH IN BLAGOEVGRAD (REF B) ON THE EVE OF THE 11TH LCY CONGRESS.

6. ZHIVKOV'S SPEECH PRODUCED A COUNTER-OFFENSIVE BY THE YUGOSLAVS (REF A). CARRYING THE POLEMICS FURTHER, ON JULY 7 PETAR STAMBOLIC, A MEMBER OF BOTH THE STATE AND PARTY PRESIDENCY, STATED THAT BULGARIA REFUSES TO RECOGNIZE MACEDONIAN NATIONALITY OR LANGUAGE AND DENIES NATIONAL RIGHTS TO MACEDONIAN MINORITY IN BULGARIA. HE CHARACTERIZED THE SAN STEFANO ANNIVERSARY AS A CELEBRATION OF GREATER BULGARIAN CHAUVINISM. ALEXANDER GRICKOV, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR LCY INTERPARTY RELATIONS, COMMENTED JULY 15 "BULGARIA TODAY STUBBORNLY DENIES THE EXISTENCE OF THE MACEDONIA NATIONAL MINORITY IN PIPIN

MACEDONIA: IT DISPUTES THE IDENTITY OF THE MACEDONIAN NATION, IT DISPUTES--IN ESSENCE--ITS EXISTENCE. THIS IS ALSO THE MAIN REASON BEHIND THE DENIAL OF THE MACEDONIAN NATIONAL MINORITY IN BULGARIA. IF THE EXISTENCE OF A NATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF YUGOSLAVIA IS DISPUTED, IF ATTEMPTS ARE BEING MADE TODAY TO ASCRIBE TO THIS NATION AN ALLEGED 'BULGARIAN ETHNIC CHARACTER,' THEN THIS CAN BE INTERPRETED IN NO OTHER WAY THAN AS A CONSTANT PRETEXT FOR BULGARIA'S TERRITORIAL CLAIMS AGAINST THE SFRY."

7. BULGARIAN RESPONSE WAS NOT LONG IN COMING--IN THE FORM OF A JULY 15 DECLARATION BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WHICH DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF A MACEDONIAN MINORITY IN BULGARIA (AND IMPLICITLY A SEPARATE MACEDONIAN NATIONALITY IN YUGOSLAVIA); ACCUSED YUGOSLAVIA OF INTERFERENCE IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS, OF
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CHERISHING TERRITORIAL ASPIRATIONS TO BULGARIAN TERRITORY, AND OF VIOLATING NON-ALIGNED PRINCIPLES; BUT NEVERTHELESS ASSERTED CONTINUED BULGARIAN WILLINGNESS TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTE. (THE BULGARIANS CIRCULATED THIS DOCUMENT AMONG DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN BELGRADE). STUNG BY THIS RIPOSTE AND ESPECIALLY ANGERED BY ITS TIMING--THE CONVENING OF THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE IN BELGRADE--THE YUGOSLAVS HAVE REACTED WITH A SERIES OF OFFICIAL STATEMENTS AND PRESS COMMENTARY, OF WHICH THE STANKOVSKI AND POPOV SPEECHES ARE THE LATEST AND MOST HARSH (SEE BELOW).

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BELGRADE 5727

8. ILINDEN POLEMICS. CELEBRATIONS SURROUNDING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE ILINDEN UPRISING--AN ABORTIVE ATTEMPT AT OUSTING THE TURKS IN MACEDONIA IN 1903--HAVE PROVIDED THE OCCASION FOR A CONTINUATION OF THE POLEMICS WITH BULGARIA. PRESIDENT TITO IN A MESSAGE TO THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE ON AUGUST 2 TOOK THE HIGH ROAD. HE STRESSED THE PRINCIPLED NATURE OF YUGOSLAV POLICY, YUGOSLAVIA'S VIEW OF NATIONAL MINORITIES AS BRIDGES BETWEEN NEIGHBORING STATES, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS LAID DOWN IN THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER AND FINAL ACT OF HELSINKI AGREEMENT.

9. PRESIDENT OF THE ILINDEN FESTIVAL COMMITTEE, BOSKO STAN-
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KOVSKI, IN AN AUGUST 1 SPEECH ACCUSED THE BULGARIANS OF FALSIFYING AND USURPING MACEDONIAN HISTORY. BEHIND THIS LIES, HE SAID, "DIRTY INTENTIONS" AND "ASPIRATIONS OF CONQUEST." THESE WOULD PROVE ILLUSIONS, HE ASSERTED, AND WOULD SUFFER THE FATE OF SIMILAR ASPIRATIONS IN THE PAST WHEN "THEY ENTERED YUGOSLAVIA IN DIRTY BULGARIAN FASCIST BOOTS."

10. PRAISING THE "GREAT REVOLUTIONARY" GEORGI DIMITROV AS ONE WHO SOUGHT TO BUILD NEW RELATIONS BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND BULGARIA, STANKOVSKI CHARACTERIZES ATTEMPTS TO CLAIM CONTINUITY IN BULGARIAN POLICY AS "GROSS DECEIT." PRESENT BULGARIAN POLICY, HE CONTINUED, WHICH DENIES THE EXISTENCE OF A MACEDONIAN MINORITY IN BULGARIA, IS AN "EXPRESSION OF THEIR VIEW TOWARD THE MACEDONIAN NATIONALITY AND ALL NATIONALITIES IN YUGOSLAVIA AND OUR COUNTRY AS A WHOLE." "ANY REVOLUTION," HE CONCLUDED, "IF NOT SELF-CRITICAL, INCREASINGLY FALLS INTO ERROR, INCLUDING CONCILIATION WITH THE REMNANTS OF NATIONALISM--FROM CHAUVINISM TO CONQUERING HEGEMONISTIC ASPIRATIONS. WHEN THESE ARE JOINED TOGETHER, A CROWNING ABSURDITY RESULTS--TO DENY THE EXISTENCE OF A NATION, USURP ITS HISTORY, AND MANIFEST ASPIRATIONS OF CONQUEST IN REGARD TO IT."

11. MACEDONIAN PREMIER BLAGOJ POPOV TOLD A GATHERING AT KRUSEVO ON AUGUST 2 "THOSE WHO FOLLOW IN THE PATHS OF THE KNIFE WIELDERS

WHO RIPPED MACEDONIA ASUNDER HAVE NO RIGHT TODAY TO DENTY THE NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF MACEDONIA TO ITS OWN STATE." REVIEWING EVENTS DURING AND IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II, POPOV SOUGHT TO PROVE THAT "GREATER BULGARIAN ASPIRATIONS" MANIFEST AT THAT TIME WERE ALSO "HEGEMONISTIC AND CHAUVINISTIC." "FASCIST BULGARIA TO WHOM HITLER ENTRUSTED THE ROLE OF THE BALKANS... APPEARING WITH THE SLOGAN OF "LIBERATOR" WAS ACTUALLY CONQUEROR OF MACEDONIAN TERRITORY IN BOTH GREECE AND YUGOSLAVIA." IN CONCLUDING HIS KRUSEVO ADDRESS, POPOV SAID "UNFORTUNATELY, CONFIDENTIAL

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MOST RECENTLY WE HAVE BEEN WITNESS TO ATTEMPTS TO BLOC THE CONTRUCTIVE, PEACE-LOVING POLICIES OF OUR COUNTRY AND ESPECIALLY THE ROLE OF PRESIDENT TITO. ALSO IN THE MOST VULGAR FASHION THESE HAVE CROPPED UP FROM NEIGHBORING BULGARIA. THIS IS PERFECTLY CLEAR AND EXPRESSED ALSO IN THE RECENTLY PUBLISHED DECLARATION OF THE BULGARIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN WHICH OUR POLICY IS DESCRIBED AS A REFLECTION OF HIDDEN TERRITORIAL PRETENTIONS AGAINST THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA."

12. SUSPICION OF SOVIET INVOLVEMENT. INEVITABLY, YUGOSLAVS SUSPECT (AND HAVE LONG SUSPECTED) A SOVIET ROLE IN THIS. THEY HAVE NOW BEGUN TO EXPRESS THIS PUBLICLY. FOR EXAMPLE, MILICA SUNDIC IN A COMMENTARY JULY 16 CHARGED SOVIET JOURNAL "NOVOJE VREMYA" WITH JOINING "THE RANKS OF THOSE WHO DELIBERATELY CONCEAL THE TRUTH ABOUT THE ESSENCE OF THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND WHO, WHICH IS EVEN WORSE, FEED BULGARIAN CLAIMS ON YUGOSLAVIA. UNFORTUNATELY, WE ARE NOT SURPRISED BECAUSE THE SOVIET PRESS HAS NEVER YET DISASSOCIATED ITSELF FROM GREATER-BULGARIAN CHAUVINISM TOWARD OUR COUNTRY. ON THE CONTRARY, WE HAVE OFTEN WITNESSED THE OPPOSITE CONDUCT." NOTING THAT "NOVOJE VREMYA" HAD FULL ACCESS TO POSITIONS AND FACTS OF YUGOSLAV SIDE BUT DID NOT CHOOSE TO PROVIDE THESE TO ITS READERS, SUNDIC REMARKS THAT "UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WE REALLY WONDER HOW BULGARIA WILL BEHAVE TOMORROW IF SHE CONTINUES RECEIVING SUPPORT FOR HER POLICY TOWARD OUR COUNTRY."

13. IN SOMEWHAT MORE VEILED TERMS, "NIN" OF JULY 30 RAN AN EDITORIAL BY MIODRAG MAROVIC WHICH OPENED BY NOTING THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD SURPRISED THE NON-ALIGNED IN 1961 BY RESUMING TESTING OF ATOMIC BOMBS, THEN ADDING THAT 17 YEARS LATER A "BLANK" WAS FIRED FROM SOFIA ON THE EVE OF NEXT MAJOR NAM CONFERENCE IN BELGRADE. MOROVIC COMMENTED THAT "THOSE WHO FIRED THAT SHOT AND THOSE WHO INSPIRED IT PROBABLY EXPECTED IT TOBE AN UNPRECEDENTED SENSATION."

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14. BROKEN WINDOW IN SOFIA. ON AUGUST 3 BELGRADE DAILY "POLITIKA" REPORTED A JULY 31 INCIDENT IN SOFIA IN WHICH A DISPLAY WINDOW ON YUGOSLAV OFFICIAL PREMISES WAS SHATTERED. "POLITIKA" NOTES THE VANDALISM OCCURRED "IN A WELL-LIGHTED AND GUARDED AREA" AND THAT THE YUGOSLAVS HAVE PROTESTED. THIS WILL INEVITABLY ADD A NEW ELEMENT TO THE DETERIORATING STATE OF RELATIONS.

15. POSSIBLE ECONOMIC REPERCUSSIONS? THE DISPUTE MAY WELL BE SPILLING OVER INTO THE ECONOMIC SPHERE AS WELL. MILAN VUKASOVIC, HEAD OF THE YUGOSLAV DELEGATION ON THE YUGOSLAV-BULGARIAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION, TOOK THE OCCASION OF THE 15TH SESSION JULY 18 IN BELGRADE TO LECTURE THE BULGARIAN DELEGATION ON THE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THE MACEDONIAN MINORITY AND ITS RIGHTS IN BULGARIA. AND WHILE THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE STATED THAT THE LEVEL OF BILATERAL TRADE FOR 1978 WOULD BE ABOVE THAT OF 1977, IT NOTED THAT CONTRACTS FOR FUTURE TRANSACTIONS ARE "FALLING BEHIND."

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